



JENNIFER M. GRANHOLM
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For Immediate Release

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Hate Crime Conference Responds to Intolerance in Michigan

LANSING, MI — The Michigan Alliance Against Hate Crimes (MIAAHC) in collaboration with the Michigan Department of Civil Rights will host, “MI Response to Hate,” a conference to develop community-based response systems to hate and bias incidents in Michigan. The event will take place Friday, September 12, 2008, 7:30 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. at the MSU Kellogg Center in East Lansing.

“This is an opportunity for the public to be informed and get involved in the fight against discrimination in Michigan,” Linda V. Parker, Director of the Michigan Department of Civil Rights said.

Michigan ranks third in the nation for the number of reported bias-motivated crimes. In 2006, there were 721 reported offenses statewide. This conference is reaching out to all community advocates, human rights professionals and law enforcement to address hate crime issues in the state. The workshops will provide information on the status of hate activity in the state, the legal implications of hate speech and the First Amendment, how to build public-private partnerships for crisis response, how to address the needs of victims in limited English proficient communities, and how to reduce violence through community coalitions.

The keynote speaker will be Lieutenant Brett Parson, assistant to the Chief of Police for the Metropolitan Police Department in Washington D.C. Parson commands the department's four liaison units (Gay and Lesbian, Latino, Asian and Deaf and Hard of Hearing) under the department's Special Liaison Unit (SLU). The morning plenary session will feature an interactive performance by Alice H. Kennedy, President and Owner of Kennedy Management Resources, Inc., a diversity theatre company.

Press availability for Lt. Parson and Director Parker will be Friday morning 9 a.m. at the Kellogg Conference Center. Room TBA.

For more information on the MIAAHC Conference visit, <http://www.miaahc.com>.

For more information on the Michigan Department of Civil Rights, visit <http://www.michigan.gov/mdcr>.

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